

Maidstone Utd. 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

WYCOMBE WANDERERS kept up the pressure on the Isthmian League leaders with two useful points at Maidstone United's Athletic Ground on Saturday. The win also served to lay the bogey that Maidstone's 'double' over Wanderers last season had created.

But Wycombe, including former Dulwich man Keith Blunt in defence, could hardly have expected Maidstone to have so little to offer in attack. The home front line rarely penetrated to good effect.

Wycombe's main problem was to break down the defensive barrier Maidstone were forced to erect with injured forwards sitting it out and players coming into the side more qualified for rearguard action.

This clash never excited the imagination of the home fans —Wycombe are always an attraction at Maidstone. Indeed on a cold wet day, a blustery wind further added to their discomfort, as well as impeding both teams' natural football.

Despite plenty of honest endeavour the entertainment rating on Saturday was not high. Even the three goals lacked sparkle and were borne out of mistakes rather than imaginative play.

Wanderers took the lead after 25 minutes when the ball bubbled over the Maidstone box after a spell of pressure from the visitors. The scorer Anthony was allowed to nip around the back of Maidstone's pedestrian back-line to slide the ball past Trice.

When Wycombe went two up just after the restart the home fans really had cause to complain. A harmless punt was covered by Debnam who headed down for his 'keeper to collect.

Trice, however, stayed on his line instead of coming out to pick up the ball and Horseman, unchallenged had the simplest of tasks to score.

Maidstone's most experienced forward ex-Hendon and Rams-gate man, Danny Lakey, had left the field with a leg injury making the task of the home side pulling back two goals just about impossible.

But the second goal did sting the home side into a measure of retaliation and they started going forward for the first time during the game.

Wycombe defenders became busier, but Maidstone could only manage one goal. The corner was headed down by substitute Scott, rebounding off a defender on the line before the Maidstone man followed up to push the ball over with his knee.

This goal came seven minutes from the end, however, and whatever spur it gave Maidstone, Wycombe were not to be deprived of the two points they had held firmly in their grasp for so long.

They were forced to defend with a measure of desperation and were relieved when the home side missed the best chance of the day with Dave Leonard hitting over the bar with Maskell already beaten.

The Wycombe 'keeper up to this late effort by Maidstone had found things quiet. His best save had come in the first half when a free kick beat all the defenders in front of him and Howe neatly deflected the ball towards the goal. But a superb diving save by the Wycombe 'keeper kept Maidstone from taking an early lead.

Wycombe never had to stretch themselves at the back and a couple of changes did not upset their composure. Keith Stephenson, Vince Faulkner and Blunt all controlled the middle well, while the forwards, without having to pull out all the stops, kept Maidstone defenders on their toes.

It would have been harsh justice for Wycombe had they lost the point in those dying minutes, for they looked several streets ahead of a side who are at present going through a bad spell after a bright start to the season.

Maidstone 1 Wycombe 2

WYCOMBE WERE surprised by the quality of Maidstone's football in the first half but superior teamwork eventually earned them victory. Wycombe had to wait until the 40th minute when Anthony gave them the lead from Baker's pass. They went further ahead seven minutes after the interval when Horseman took advantage of slackness in Maidstone's defence.

From then on Wycombe were in command but Scott snatched a late consolation goal for Maidstone when he headed in from a corner.